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last for a limited time only, are terminated, if the business of the assembly is not too urgent, each of the members rests in the cabin which belongs to his class; but as soon as the sun appears above the horizon, a drum calls all of the chiefs to the assembly, which remains in session until sunset.[81]

In another place he makes certain amplifications regarding the time when such conventions took place. He says:

"These assemblies, which I have attended for twenty years, are held usually at the end of April or the beginning of May, as I have already said. To them are carried complaints and demands of all kinds, where the interests of the entire nation and its allies are discussed and regulated. They are held sometimes in the month of September, before they separate to go hunting, but then they are not general, few interesting things happen, and strangers are rarely present." [82]

Milfort is almost the only writer who gives a hint regarding the manner in which the chiefs and officials of the various towns were seated. It is probable that their individual merit often outweighed the numerical importance of the town.

Speaking in these assemblies was a high art and was, next to success in war, the major means of social advancement. Religious sentiment was attached to it, and before a public speech the Creek speaker used to spit four times with deliberation and repeat a formula. The oratorical language was full of metaphorical allusions, and irony and satire were resorted to rather than denunciation. Says Adair:

537 [554] [726]

"I have heard several eloquent Indian leaders, just as they were ready to set off for war, to use as bold metaphors and allegories in their speeches—and images almost as full and animating, as the eloquent penman of the old divine book of Job, even where he is painting, with his strong colours, the gladness and contempt of the beautiful war-horse, at the near approach of the enemy. I heard one of their captains, at the end of his oration for war, tell the warriors that stood outermost, he feelingly knew their guns were burning in their hands; their tomohawks thirsty to drink the blood of their enemy; and their trusty arrows impatient to be on the wing: and, lest delay should burn their hearts any longer, he gave them the cool refreshing word, 'Join the holy ark, and away to cut off the devoted enemy.' They immediately sounded the shrill whoó-whoòp, and struck up the solemn, awful song, *Yó*, etc." [83]

And in another place:

"Formerly, at a public meeting of the head-men, and chief orators of the Choktah nation, I heard one of their eloquent speakers deliver

[81] Milfort, Mém., pp. 209-206. [83] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 64.
[82] Ibid., pp. 224-225.

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•537 a very pathetic, elaborate, allegorical, tragic oration, in the high praise, and for the great loss, of their great, judicious war-chieftain, *Shu-las-hum-mâsh-tâ-be*, our daring, brave friend, *red shoes*. The orator compared him to the sun, that enlightens and enlivens the whole system of created beings: and having carried the metaphor to a considerable length, he expiated on the variety of evils, that necessarily result from the disappearance and absence of the sun; and, with a great deal of judgment, and propriety of expression, he concluded his oration with the same trope, with which he began."[64]

642 Stiggins tells us that the confederate council was in reality without power. He says:

"The form of Government under which they live is a tyrannical oligarchy in its principles and practiced under that head to the full extent. At a slight view the most of people suppose and say that it is a democracy on republican principles but it is far different, for all public business whether of a national or private character is done by the chiefs. Though the nation is summoned in what is termed their grand council, when the state of the nation is supposed to be examined into, and their oral laws made, the assembly say not a word in the matter. For while in their sittings the assembled body of the nation sit as mutes, without being consulted in any manner until a few chiefs in their council house make the laws for their government without condescending to ask an opinion or approbation in any case, the national body being merely convened to hear what is done, for after a law is digested by the chiefs the national convention is informed of its tendency by the orator of the nation in a very exact and precise manner, who moreover informs them of all that has been transacted, which new law when they are made acquainted with its tendency, let it be as it may, they are the most obedient subjects under the sun to the penalties of it, be it oppressive or not. Should they infringe the law they will suffer beating, confiscation of their property or even death without a murmur or family resentment. Moreover, should an Indian be obstreperous in contending for his right of property or otherwise or obtrude on the right or even interests of a chief, the chiefs can so far tyrannize after a consultation as to have him beaten or slain, as a common disturber of the peace, without any other imputation of guilt than a law breaker as they term it.

642 "In former days in the time of their self importance and undis-
648 turbed government, before an agent was located in the nation by the
177 U. S. to improve their morals and reform their customs, their ordained chiefs were more rude, active, and despotic and more frequent in their mandates of tyranny, and not near so uniform and circumspect in their deportment as now toward the common men. In later years the principal chiefs or great men of the nation have been

[64] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 11.